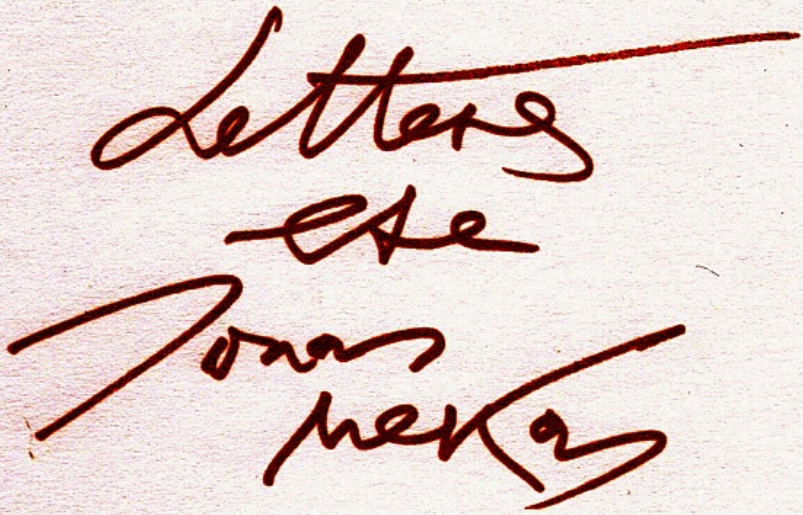
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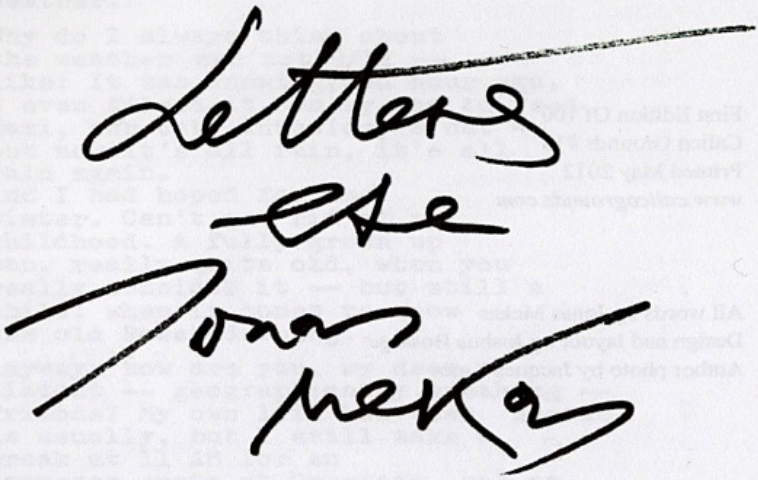
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Mid-January Letter to Friends

January 19th already! Where did the first 18 days go? And what's left of them? I'll find out some day. Right now I am thinking about the weather.

Why do I always think about the weather and not 9/11 -- like: It was snowing, an hour ago, I even filmed it, on my way to feed Maxi, our cat, Anthology's cat -- but now it's all rain, it's all rain again.
And I had hoped for the winter. Can't get rid of my childhood. A fully grown up man, really quite old, when you really consider it -- but still a child, when it comes to snow -- the old Rosebud thing...

Anyway: how are you, my dear distant -- geographically speaking -- friends? My own life has been hectic, as usually, but I still make a break at 11 AM for an espresso corto at Cremcafe, and at 12:30, if Julius, Auguste or any visitor arrives, we go to the Library, a.k.a. Mars Bar, for a "short story." This week it was Louís, from Edinbourgh /I should really say -- Louis told me so -- from Edinborough, with a special stress on the letter "r" --/. Louis carved his name on the wooden counter using my Swiss knife, not far from where Paini carved his.

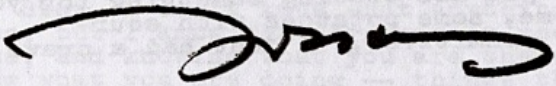
So how are you doing, there, in Paris, Tokyo, Vienna, Hamburg? Is it raining in Paris? Brigitte, agnès, Pip, Michel, Dominique, Danièle, Jean-Jacques, Peter, Tetsuo, Gozo, Christian?
Have some wine, or sake. Relax, relax, do not dwell on 9/11, and do not work too hard, have some fun, and some laziness... la paresse... Because I think of you all,

and I have fun despite the fact that my life is full of unpredictable troubles, nuisances, even disasters, and very often I have no idea what's happening at all.

But I think of you all, and the knowing that you are there -- in Tokyo, in Vienna, and yes, in Paris which you, my Parisian friends, may hate or, sort of put down , but which is a city of many of my dreams -- your poets have saved my sanity -- yes, the knowledge that you are there
and haven't given up your dreams yet though you have your anxieties & crashes -- yes, you keep me going here and sometimes I even sing -- though last night the song didn't go too well, we went to Sophie's bar, and Julius and Louis had too many Bushmills, too many, for a song, so we ended up playing pool.

Yes, I just looked through the window, and I have to report to you that it's snowing, snowing again. So it's all very promissing, very very promissing, my friends. A thin snow, a miserable snow, but snow,

on this 19th day of January of the year 2002 AD, according to the Western callendar, "system of reckoning time for the practical purpose of recording past events and calculating dates for future plans." /The Columbia Encyclopedia./
So -- keep going, as one Bum said to another, I overheard once --
on the Bowery --



2002

June 27 2002

Dear Stan:

A huge rain storm just passed by. Thundering heavily. Disturbing my cats. Some old music on radio, don't know what but very pleasant. Pleasant when you are cooking something for your supper, like me, some potatoes with sour-kraut... That primitive... I just had a crave for it.

Haller calls. Tells in a concerned voice all about your troubles.
Ah, that word, chemotherapy...
How many of my friends had to deal with it...
Susan. George. Annette. I have been lucky sofar, cross your fingers. I just had some straight radiation stuff -- but even so I walked the streets and I thought I was transparent and everybody could see through me.

Ah, Stan, I wish I could pass to you some of my farmer boy's health. I am drinking right now a glass of Veltliner, Peter's favored Vienna wine, to your health, feeling guilty that I am still here and comparitavely in good shape despite some threats that were immediately radiated out -- luckily -- but I want to drink to you this evening -- not that it's of any help to you but somehow the fate has brought us together so I feel we are sort of related one could even say brothers of sorts

so I wish you strength and endurance and faith and humor and trust persistent trust in angels & everything that really matters and frees and opens and heals & yes, yes, poetry poetry of being

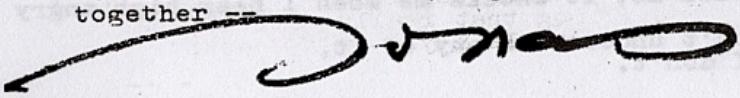
I am with you, Stan, although I seldom write or call -- my own life last ten years hasn't been bread and honey -- and even that is not the right image: when I was ten, I was by a river, under a bridge, small river -- I was eating a piece of bread my mother had given me, with honey on it, -- it was my graduation day -- Primary School -- and this girl comes and sprays sand on my sandwich... -- I don't know what it means but I have never forgotten it -- it comes back to me at least once a year, this memory: why did she have to do it!

Yes, Stan, I don't know what anything really means, but I know that friendship means a lot to me, and knowing that you are there in Coloradc doing what you are doing -- things that have meant so much to me -- ah, forgive me, Stan, that I have been so rare in calling or writing or saying things that I should be saying -- always so busy, always running, always on the way, so rarely having time to stop and take breath -- I don't know why I got into this -- but that's how my life has been -- so forgive me, Stan,

Anyway -- I think you should go out and have a Bushmill or something and no matter what pep up & boost & drown it all and I wish I could be there now with you to keep you company and drink with you -- because Robert he said you feel very low and are abt to give on chemotherapy & leave it all to angels -- /up

whatever happens, whatever is the decision, I am with you this evening -- this rainy thundering and very very hot evening writing you this long line letter with a glass of Veltliner next to me which means I am thinking also about Peter and P.Adams besides you -- which means, the present is mitigated -- as Peter would say -- with the past.

We are all still here, separately but together --



End of the year Letter to friends

11:30 at night this 23rd of December. Tomorrow my birthday.
Message fro Stan, on phone. Cancer is "terminal." That's what they call it.
"They quit, gave up. Cancer too spread. Doctors won't operate."
Message from Fred Camper: Stan broke, no money to pay doctors, hospitals.

Walked to Anthology. Snowing lightly.
Paul Morrissey came. Leg stiff, athritis... Hopped up& down the stairs, on one leg, in a funny way.

What else is bad?
Eight Palestinians killed... Small type, page sixteen.

Last night we stayed till 1:00, Anthology's Christmas party.
Now it's late. The day gone by. Pip, Julius, Fabiano, drinking at Dempsey's, reviewing the year. Not thinking about the horrors, trying to be positive. But I am very sceptical about it all, the world is so bad, I mean, the people, the whites, the jews, the muslims, africans, mexicans, russians -- all bad bad bad.

I am innocent, I said last night. I only hurt some small animals, as a child. But I have asked their forgiveness so many times now, so many times, I've even cried remembering what I did to baby crows, frogs.
I think they have forgiven me.
So I am innocent, I don't think I have done any real bad thing in my mature grown-up life,
I really feel so.
I don't even know how to get angry, or shout, it always shocked me, it shocks me when I hear high angry voices.
No no no, I don't understand any of it, no, I don't, I don't.

But tomorrow is my birthday and I should feel more grown up, es pecially at my age, I should know more about the real ways of this world.
But I don't.

The world passed me by, I missed it, I only heard noise and I saw blood in newspapers and salesmen on TV selling things I have no use for.
I only own two pairs of pants, some shirts, ran out of socks last week.

So where am I? The ultimate failure, according to the statistics and evaluations of real life authorities in Terra anno 2002 -- just before my birthday, which is tomorrow /same as Joseph Cornell's and Louise Bourgeois -- Happy B'Day, Joseph, and Chère Louise/.

NEXT DAY:
We all had a lot of music and dance and wine at Anthology, and the Indians, the Uta Nation came and bles: the avantgarde, they never did that for Hollywood. And the Bear Boy sang a Uta Nation song in our honor.And the snow was still falling outside.

DAY AFTER:
Espresso with Raimund. More bad news. Robert just moved out of his Bleecker Street place, his leg hurts too much, can not be operated, heart too weak, moved into a room with an elevator, now looking at New York through a twentieth floor window, a great view, he said /supposedly/.
And DoDo is very very depressed, she said so on phone, very depressed.

"I know that I am because my little dog recognizes me," said Gertrude Stein, it's on my wall.
That much for all the philosophy of Being.

Peter is in Brasil. He hates Christmas in Vienna, the shopping. And P.Adams still doesn't drink.
And Annette had three trips to hospital this year, she just called, is back home, in a wheel chair, broken leg.

"I wish you a better year, only one break, one trip to the hospital next year, not three," I said. "No no no," she said, "don't say that..."

NEXT DAY:
The snow melted. I spent three hours chipping ice from the sidewalk, with Andy and Robert. Broke the shovel.

My eyes are about to close, it's very late. But I refuse to sleep. Go to the icebox, get some wine. Wonder, I wonder where is agnès, and Brigitte. And all three Dominiques and three Danièles.
Reading Cendrars.

The mind is failing. Maybe I should watch TV. Maybe there is something with Clint Eastwood or Bruce Willis -- some action, yes, some action, that's what I need right now --.

NEXT DAY:
Talk with Stan. "I have accepted it, I am not worrying about it any more. I am continuing my work, now, scratching film with my nails & spit. I have no problems with dying at all. But it's hard for the children as they watch me die."

LATER:
We played and danced into the morning at Anthology, all the lonely souls with no other place to go New Year's Night. It was really quite amazing with all those musicians coming from the street out of the Lower East Side night -- our own Free Music Philmarmonic sort of, we thought. And we all had a great time & at midnight we all went into the street and danced and played happily, not minding the cold at all --.

- Yes, life is going on. Forget the utopias: life is here and now.
I suddenly wonder: where is Harmony tonight, what crazy fantasies are fluttering around his amazing head. Sebastian just called from somewhere in China, somewhere near Burma and Tibet.

"Have you tried any dog meat yet," I asked.
"No," he said, "And I am not sure I will -- You know how they kill the dogs here, in the markets? In the bags, with knives, they stab them, in the bags, and you'll never hear a more terrible bloody cry like that of the dog dying, stabbed, bagged, helpless, I don't know how I managed to take it," he said.

NEXT DAY:
Pip came back, visited Stan. In bed all the time, too weak. "They told me I should self-hypnotize myself and face the cancer cells and kill them. Which I did -- I mean, it's no big deal for me to go into that kind of state -- I've done it all my life, working on my films. So I faced them. I saw them, the cancer cells. And I saw they were so beautiful, I couldn't kill them, no..." said Stan.

Later, Peter calls, from Vienna, just back from Brasil. They still kill Indians there even now, the gold diggers do. And then the diggers are killed by the gold merchants. "I am resigning from the human race," he said. "I'll do the same," I said.

So that's that.
But this doesn't mean I am giving up in what all those before me, before us, those who were foolish like me and some of you, of us, believed in and worked hard to preserve in order that the City wouldn't be destroyed by gods -- that is, as long as there is at least one who believes in the not believable, in short, in

Poetry.

Jan 3, 2003

I N P R A I S E O F H E A T

Ah, the summers of
New York!
Adrenalin of 95 degrees! 100!
Happy I walk the streets of New
World, panicking about the next
bill, on top of all the others --
banks, Ft.Lee, and the Fluxus artists
of last October, still not paid --
I don't open Jackson MacLow's
letters --

ah, I need it all, it drives me mad
and keeps me going, these debts and these
constant emergencies, threatenings,
each worse than the other,
since... since winter 1953 on
Avenue A, Gallery East -- not far from where
I met Lilly --
no, I didn't move far away, my friends,
not far at all --

and, I tell you, you get used to it all
and it's just another heat, another
day and 95 degrees and then maybe
goes up to 100 and everything seems to
about to crash or, say, melt, and Robert,
even Robert seems to lose his cool -- I wish
he'd eat some chocolate, but he's forbidden to do
so -- so we write some desperate irrational
letters and sit on phones and,
I tell you, it's very very hot and
we sleep horribly and sweat -- it goes up to
105 and more, maybe 120.

Ah, no end to our summer heat, but that's
adrenalin we need to live, it's our way.

of living, it seems, and if, imagine!
suddenly everything would get normal and
cool and suddenly no angry calls
and threats to turn off electricity
and phones, and close the Ft.Lee vault,
and Fat West, three months behind
by now in payments -- and what's her
name, calling for her $75 from four
years ago --
the heat would drop to maybe 70
and we'd look around and listen in disgust:

ah, how normal, disgustingly, and how like
everybody else's
our lives have become, with no
threats and no crashes and no emergencies
and no crazy woman coming to our door about
the street lamps with no bulbs because we have
no three dollars to buy them --.

Ah! I like this heat. I think it's
reaching one hundred, it's going up,
I am all excited -- the rats are leaving the
ship -- they think it will sink -- Ah, you
little ratties, you don't know we are the
!supper rats, Jack knew it! -- and no hurricane
no heat will sink us!
It's in our blood, the disasters, shipwrecks and
supper heats & constant sinkings -- it's
our very nature! So let's go to Sophie,
Julius, let's have a beer -- later
we'll stop at Max Fish, to see Gloria
who just shaved her head & put her hair in
a jar of parmeldehide, in a Gallery --
Ludlow street, just a door from Gallery
East, anno 1953 --
she serves us beer for free, and we'll
play pool, maybe --.

"It hits you like a hot hair dryer, this heat,"
said Raimund. "This is what Peter said,"

he conti ued, as we were driving
in his happy jeep through the 110 degrees
of New York evening. "He said 'when
the lemmings are marching towards their mass
suicide, the avantgarde stays
in the back,' "
and we laughed. Ah, Peter, we wish you'd be
here with us this evening, and
T.Adams, and Gozo, Istvan, Giuseppe,
Hermann, and DoDo Jin Ming --

So be calm, be calm, dear friends, be calm
in the very eye of
storm: we do not budge, we enjoy the sweat,
we like the scorching heat, we like
when it hits 100 and
more --

go, heat, go go go, rise up and up and
up -- we are the junkies of the constant
heat! we are the Supper Rats of
cinema --

go up, heat,
go!

July 1955

A REQUIEM FOR THE XXth CENTURY

Millennium ended fifteen minutes
ago,
I watched it all on TV.
Fiji, New Zealand, Tokyo, Moscow,
Paris, etc.
It happened as I was splicing
my film, it fell between the splices,
so to speak. Between the splices of a film
entitled As I Was Moving Ahead
Occasionally I Saw Brief Glimpses
of Beauty.
Wiener Waltz is playing on radio,
a minute ago was the
Ninth Symphony.

Now I am typing and thinking of
you, my dear friends,
in Tokyo, Paris, Hamburg, Vilnius, São
Paolo, Madrid and many other cities
and towns and villages, some of them
nameless.
Ah, Peter and Hermann, I almost forgot
Vienna! That will cost me a bottle of
Veltliner.

The radio guy is yapping now about all the
great events of the century.
But I still have to hear about Apollinaire
and Vallejo and Bunuel and Trakl, Huidobro,
Cocteau, Yessenin, Isidore Isou,
Gertrude Stein, and the donkeys of
Avila, and Julius and Auguste, and my
childhood river Roveja, and Maxi,
Anthology's cat, and the names of all
the women I loved, and anything that
really matters and formed the mind & essence
of my century.

But I don't really care this way or
that, because Harry Smith, who still lives
at Anthology /he was heard doing research
in the Library last night/ -- he told me
that everything remains in the stars
eternally,
and Harry knew it, Agrippa von Nettesheim
knew it too, & so knew Giordano Bruno &
Giuseppe Zevola & Barbara Rubin &
especially, I am sure of that,
Storm De Hirsch.

So it's all here now and
tomorrow, the poets and things that really
matter, like friendship, love,
angels, fluttering of butterfly wings
in China, and things
like that, and I would include the poetry of
Jackson McLow, Bosho and, absolutely,
potato pancakes, the kind I make, the kind
my mother taught me to make /no onions,
please!/.

So I celebrate it all now, late this
night, exactly thirty minutes into the
Third Millennium, and I drink to you all --
and ah, to Robert Kelly and Tuli Kupferberg too --
as we move ahead... Dear Gozo, it's all
a big joke on us, anyway, invented
by some Zen lunatic or
Taylor Mead.

NEXT DAY
we sat at Dempsey's /we didn't feel like
going to the Mars Bar somehow/
Audrius and Auguste, drinking our Irish amber
beer. "I saw the morning come," said
Auguste, "and it was a very clear &
beautiful morning, so it's a good sign
for the Millennium."
So we drank to that. Then Auguste said, "Ah,
remember how they gave us

all that stuff, in madhouse, the Russians,
and I used to push it under my tongue
and later spit it out."
"I did the same," said Audrius.

This was a conversation absolutely not like in
Pan Tadeusz by Adam Mickiewicz, but I thought
it summed up for me the
Twentieth Century, I mean, the one that people
are talking about & celebrating,
not mine.

Ah, how many pills, injections did your body
take, dear Auguste,
how many injections were forced upon you,
it's amazing you still play music and sing
and paint and are alive.

EARLIER that day
we sat around the Round Table, at
Anthology. We waited for Masha, but she
called in, was sick. She had planned to bring
some Russian herring & cabbage &
stuff.
So we had some wine instead.
How come, we wondered, with all the halooballoo,
Y2K and everything, how come there was no mention
of the Person responsible for it all!
So we drank to Jesus Christ. Auguste
drank red Rhone wine, I drank cheap
Vino Verde because I am all in
Spain, these days, I think I am half
Spanish.

Ah, my friends!
We all had some great times occasionally.
Red, blue, and yellow & orange
times. Not everything was that black,
you have to
admit.
We all saw some glimpses of beauty &
happinness as we moved ahead, even in
stagnation,

as we moved ahead through the horrors of
the Twentieth Century -- did you see picture
of the mother carrying a child, in
Sarajevo, or was it in some other
bloody place, blood running over the
child's face, the picture was in
color. Ah, ah, what a way to begin
life! Twentieth Century, I hope it will never
come back,
not even in bad dreams, I hope it will be
swallowed by some deep hole and spat out
into Dante's circle number
Nine.

Scars are on our bodies, minds,
souls even,
some of us do not always sleep well
all night -- I don't -- sometimes we still
jump up, not knowing why, as horrors
linger.

But I embrace you, the new Millennium, full of
hope, fool's hope, trustingly,
still believing in miracles, Santa Teresa de
Avila & St.Francis, little birds & bugs
& I cried for the broken trees of Versailles,
I still believe in all things unimportant &
useless for my contemporaries
as I move ahead,
as we all do,
all alone in our essential,
binding loneliness, still believing in
Paradise,
very very invisible but transparently
shining and
inevitable.

It's late at night.
I can not sleep. It's
three in the morning. I keep writing.
What else can I do. What else
can I do. What else can I
do.

Even the flesh is not
burning.
Eyes, and where are the
eyes. I want to see the
eyes.
Tell me, tell me -- and do not
turn away.
I want to look into them. But I do not
dare, from fear what's in
them --

as I keep moving ahead,
ahead.

Jan. 3, 2000

Dear agnes:

The young people were young, their
happinness was totally and openly happy
and their beauty was beautiful &
exhilaratingly innocent and contageous as only
innocence can be.

I looked, I listened, I saw & it was
so freeing and so totally somewhere else
and so far from what's on TV and
newspapers,
the world of the mature & the grown-ups...

and as I contemplated it all like this
pushing casually through the crowd
I saw you, agnès -- unmistakingly you --
who else could be so relaxed, so totally,
and so totally there -- so totally yourself &
so totally in it all at the same
time -- an image of transparency and relaxation
and happinness -- Ah, you manage to become
so totally part of no matter what it is,
completely and totally with what is now, this
moment, embracing it, moving with it with
no effort, lightly and amazingly,
lightly and amazingly --

like I've seen same in some old Chinese
drawings, same radianc e and lightness
& happinness, the poetry of life in the faces,
postures & lines ofpoets and drunks and geishas
and haiku geniuses who all had transcended
-- like you -- the pain and absurdity of
Real Life --

I thought so as I was walking home through
a mild drizzle along the
late January Broome street -- thinking --
and happy.

Now I am typing this, and I have a glass of
Cahors, still full -- Arab drums on radio &
a Persian flute --

"it has a magic in it," says the musician and
then he plays -- and then he plays --
And it's all very amazing, dear agnes,
it's all very amazing, everything,
I mean, everything --

Feb.7.2003 Jonas

Oberhausen Letter

May 3, 1995:

Ah, Friends!
Late night. The jetlag
got me, finally. I do not
know where I am...

The radio babbles
something about Schoenberg. "He was
so weak writing his
Illness Piece he hardly knew
what he wrote..."

Ah, Schoenberg!...
Istvan is still dancing, his jacket
in the corner, his white striped
Hungarian shirt flapping.

Yes, we saw the sun rise. Angela
came, we drank the bottle of Takaji
Istvan had brought from
Budapest. It was late, and the morning
was coming over the empty
streets of the Ruhr
town.

Ah, Friends! Christophe, the giant
coal shafts against the sky, and the young
green trees full of
Spring green, slowly gaining
over the factory grounds, the rusting
pipes and towers -- museum now of the
Western Civilization, Industrial
Revolution,

and the river
clearing itself from its bad dreams --
"We get our fish from this river,"
said Dore O., as we looked at the river
Ruhr.

Ah, said Istvan, the people, let's eat
where the people eat --
so we found this little tavern, echt
Ruhr Deutsch, and we had local beer
and then tried some Koernchen, "You have
to try this, you have," said our new
echt Ruhr Deutsch friends. And we drank it
and it was good for our stomachs --
last night we didn't do so well, no -- we needed
it badly now.

Yumi was dancing, madly as ever, I think
the wine finally got her --
ah, beautiful, mad Yumi! And Takashi,
happy and roundfaced, with his
video camera, in the midst of it
all -- "Ah, Warhol was not really
a Hungarian -- he was a Routenian," said
Istvan, "a Lithuanian
subordinate..." "No wonder," said I,
"I too do not know where
I come from, and I do not want to think
of it this night,
the Spring is just breaking out,
just look at the trees!"

It was three in the morning. We walked
long, Istvan searching for a beer --
Christophe didn't come back, he was up there in
the tourists' tower where there is a lot
of loud music, bad food and teenage
girls with boyfriends --.

We felt very miserable, we had chili and
white wine, and now we were sick and our
stomachs were suffering.
"Ah," said Istvan, "it was a bad mistake,
we should have had a beer instead,
not wine..." The streets were
empty. Even Falstaff's closed.

And Nekes, no,
he's not going to see us, he said --
the alchemist at work! -- So what's new
in the world, I haven't read any papers
for three days.

Mad Erdely's walking through the
empty streets of Budapest, frames
fluttering --
the Deep convulses and repeats its dream
again and again
in a cosmic nervous breakdown --.

Ah, where am I this late night,
in the Lufthansa clouds, drinking my
Krombacher Pils,
thinking about all of you, my
friends,
Angela, so graceful and so totally
relaxed in the very eye of the storm,
and mad Istvan, and mad Yumi, and mad Jack
Smith dancing happily in the wire
junk of New Jersey dump, and the Little
Girl waves and winks
and the mouse eats the cheese and the girl
lies naked and the train enters the
station. Ken picks up Azazel and carries
to bed as camera keeps running, then
stops. The radio is still
on.
"Everything a man does he does it for
his ideal woman," the radioman says,
"said Balanchine."

Said Balanchine.
And the night is late. The jetlag
is getting me, finally and
certainly. I am holding, I am still
holding, but the night will
win, my dear Friends.

Dear Gozo, Tetsuo, Friends:

I sit here, this night, my table all messed
up, visite cards, and scraps of paper
from my sweaty pockets -- gokuraku -- satoyamo --
shiavase -- karaoke -- hatchigatsu no tabibito --
and I am remembering it all, and I am
drunk with it, again, and I wish I would be there,
with you now, and we'd lift our
glasses and say kampai, i sveikata! with all
the gods of the old Japan and old Lithuania
lifting their glasses with us -- kampai! to friendship,
i sveikata ! to poetry, to our little films,
our little, regional songs, words --

the tea supper breakfast room in Ganzan
is like in the old days. Ah, it's good to be
here like this, said Gozo. Good for us and for
those who have never been here, like this,
tasting the old and the eternal and the
ceremony of being together. The two women,
never I would have never expected -- they were
plain and simple and down to earth -- but they
danced like nameless anonymous goddesses

GANZAN

their humble perfection and heart open to us,
to the occasion -- and I thought about my own
childhood village, and the simplicity of the rural,
disappearing regional life and I wanted
to dance with them --

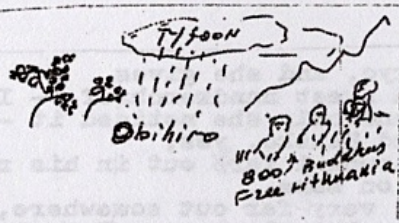
and in the morning we were served eggs boiled in hot springs -- but I told Tetsuo, I will keep out, no hot springs for me, keeping my father's tradition -- he always found an excuse -- a lost cow, or other such emergency -- to skip another sauna, our Friday evening tradition --... I am a good son of my father... although secretely I craved, I wished I could be part of it, in Ginzan... Ah, we are weak, sometimes, and it's good to be weak, sometimes... Forgive me, my friends...

then we all walked through the night, and
Tokyo was all light and Big Business & Paris & we
all crowded into a midnight bar
and the cabalero told good dirty jokes and
we drank a lot of asahi-Z and good sake, ah, good
sake of Yamagata, good like its poets & there was
Yoshio & Kuro, all very happy, yes, yes, gokuraku,

gokuraku, little fragments of Paradise --
I saw Tetsuo's tired face, he kept
it bravely straight -- but we all challenged
our nightly endurance, and Gozo said, yes,
it's time, it's time -- but we pretended not to hear,
and had another round of sake Yoshio's sake --
and then we walked out.

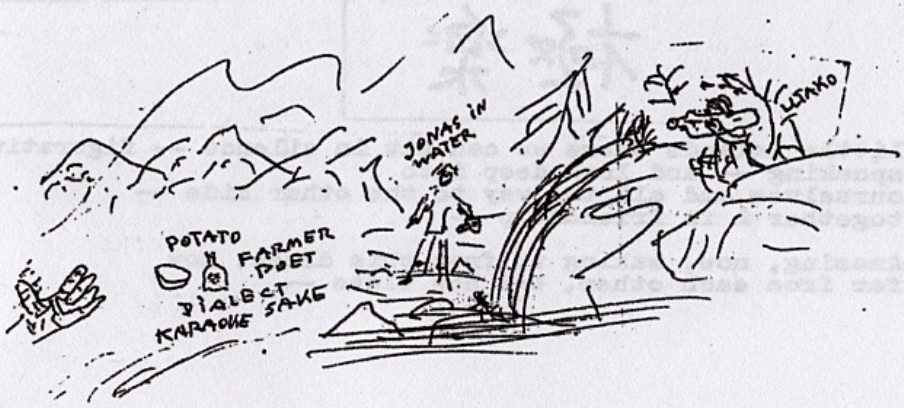
Ah, the nights of this far island, the dark wall
of the imperial palace, stones, trees,
TV vqices late into the night talking about the
coup d'etat, Lithuania, and New World Order,
and I, tired, my face in the pillow, the
real fading into unreal, the faces
of 800 Buddhas drinking sake with the
pantheist gods of Lithuania -- & a bouquet of
light blue flowers on the night table --
it's late. I sleep and I dream --

Here I am, only a few days later,
I am not sure where I am --
during the day I am in New York -- I see our cat
Appache crossing the room, Sebastian by the
flowers, Oona went out, Hollis deep in a book --
yes, I am here -- this crowded table, the paper
mess --but my nights, my dreams
are still in Obihiro, and Yamagata, and Ginzan
and Tokyo -- In my dreams, every night since I
came back I have been with you, again --
Gozo, and Tetsuo, and Kuro, and Chieko, and
Suzuki, and Sato, and Utako, the patient Utako,
the eye of Ulysses -- and yes, the black haired Gypsy
poet of Yamagata... who read our hands and told me I
was dead once in my life, and we were
all nymphomaniacs, dear Gozo, Tetsuo... -- and than
we sang karaoke -- yes, I remember now, all of you,
with names and without names -- Kumashiro,
breathing eternity into the debris of our
civilization -- yes, the rains
falling over the greenery of Obihiro
hills and deep ravines, gorges & bridges & we, walking
all wet and stepping into the puddles, and



all those flowers and all those bottles of
asahi-Z and all the good friends & dragonflies,
the souls of ancestors, a tyfoon and
a coup d'etat and a hurricane in Cape Cod -- and then
we visited the 800 Buddhas and they freed
Lithuania -- Buddhas with faces aged by time & wind
& rains, but none of their political strength lost! --
I heard the tiny bells ring -- because that's how
it works -- & we walked down the steep bank down
to the waterfalls, with all the vegetables & all,

ah, Yamagata, the angry disillusioned Farmer Poet --
I'll be waiting for your native dialect
poems, yes, the soul, the invisible language,
& we talked about regionalism, potatoes, and the
beauty of the local, and small & the disappearing
countryside & the sad governmental policies,
and the water was icy cold
as I stood deep in it, remembering my
childhood,



and this girl, in Tokyo, and she gives
me this tiny flowered sweet handkerchief -- I was
sweating profusely, and only she noticed it --
I still have it -- and Kazuko, yes,
and Takanashi, more drunk & far out in his regular
daily mind than ever on sake,
and Gozo, so far out, very far out somewhere, in
the gods' territories, but always so close, and
in charge, so to speak -- amazing Gozo --
and ah, La Jete is still there, we had some sake,
and some beer, Kuro, Utako -- actually, civilization
hasn't yet progressed /or regressed/ that far, there
are still some tiny beautiful regional islands, fragments
of Paradise, gokuraku, gokuraku -- Chisko, the
good teacher! --

極楽

little islands where we can sit in silence -- figuratively
speaking -- and look deep into
ourselves and all the way to the other side --
together & in friendship --

Amazing, now, waking up from this dream, how
far from each other, but how close --

yes, the invisible strings of Joseph Cornell! --
this is not a dream, no, this is still very
real and is continuing -- Yes, continuing, as
I said on Utako's tape, to Gozo, as we were
speeding across the suburbian landscape, the
train carrying us into the future
with every detail of past ten days sharp
and vivid & eternally stuck in my very being --
changing, modifying me, challenging --
ah, my friends, can you hear the sound of the
wheels -- as we move ahead -- can you hear me,
Penelope -- yes, yes, Gozo, sayonara, Friends,
sayonara -- not a good-bye! -- as we continue --
as we continue, alone, alone, but together --

September 4, 1991

MY PARIS FRIENDS:

Quarter to eleven PM.
On the radio: a funny piece by Sousa,
Le Capitaine.
Outside: raining.
Just came back from Anthology.
Poured a big glass of Corvo for myself,
Sicilian wine -- I will go there some day,
it's one of my dreams.
Alone in the house. Sebastian went out
to see a movie.

Where am I, my friends?
Same place, I guess... Went through some
radiation. I was full of it I thought I was
transparent. And I thought I was
perfect! I still think I am...
Ah, the fragility of flesh.

Didn't go to Kassel, too broke.
And I am very worried about $32,000 I'll have
to pay for Sebastian's Cambridge /england/
tuition. And my radiation bills.
My cat Rumple is looking at me a little bit
worried thinking about his food cans...

Anyway, I had to cut down on wine
because my bank account is on zero, which is
a bad story, my friends --
I don't mean the bank: I mean the wine...
Discovered fava beans. Very good. And, as
George/Maciunas/ would say: cheap... I also
discovered -- thanks to Dominique /Noguez/--
Michel Deguy, Jacques Réda and Philippe
Jaccottet.
Rediscovered: Cavafy, Vallejo and Vogelweide.

Now it's raining very badly. I can hear it
beating on the window.
On the radio: Ute Lampert /sp?/ singing
cabaret songs.
Now she's talking about Nick Cave.
I have to get her CD, "Punishing Kiss."

She is very good. I have to get it. Never heard of her. Ah, how many good things we miss. Like I miss you, now, my Paris Friends!

I am a little bit lost. Doing too many things at once. Everybody wants something from me. And I haven't learned to say no. And they all think I am a millionaire in disguise... But my stomach has shrunk from living on sausage, goat cheese, garlic & wine. I hope I won't end up like that guy in Diary of a Country Priest. I was always afraid of that.

New York is very hot. But subdued. Streets emptier. But the bars are packed. I don't know where they get the money. I guess, from sales of bad art. Somebody told me I should have gone to work on Wall street.

What else is new? My table is clattered with old newspapers.
"In the Pouring Rain, England's Goal Draught Ends"
"Warmth Transforms Alaska"
"Le vote d'une France qui doute"
"Explosion des Pessimismus"
"Pain Remains"

Ah, music. Why didn't I become a musician... This evening at Anthology I went down to the basement, Auguste and Dalius were playing. But they were pretty drunk on vodka and I didn't feel like vodka tonight, so I left. I bet they are still playing. Just for themselves. Dalius on drums, Auguste on his Charlie Parker sax.
It's 12:30 AM now.
On the radio: a madrigal, very happy one.

I hope it won't be so hot tomorrow. All this sweat. The rain didn't help much.

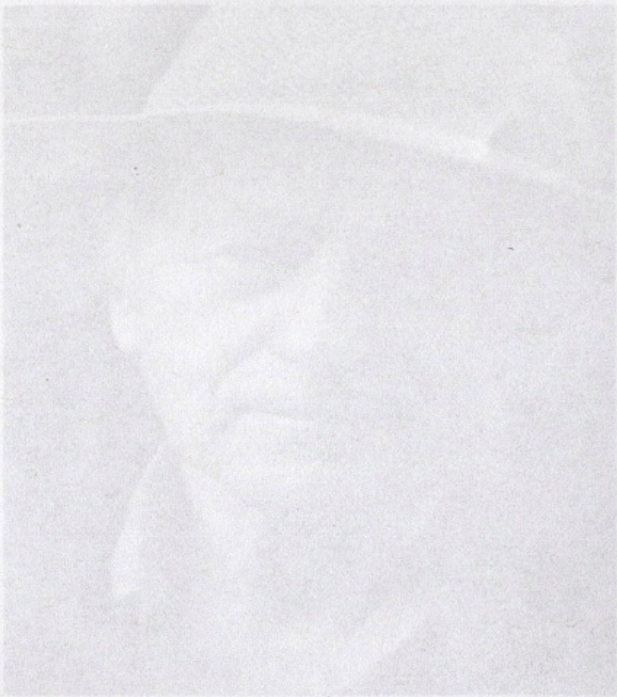
So this is a little letter about myself. Nothing very important.

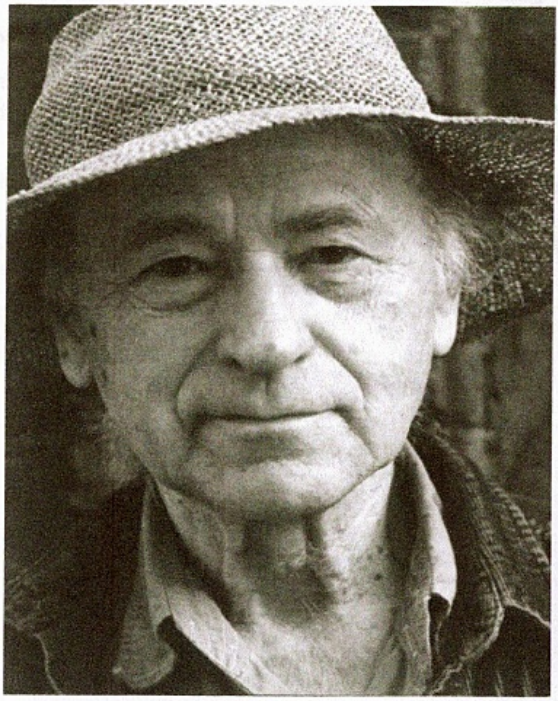
But I felt I had to write to you all.
I need my dose of connectedness -- I need my dose of Paris -- even if it's only in my mind, yes, Paris and all of you, my friends, you are my Paris & you are on my mind now, this late evening as I am typing this letter. Otherwise, probably, there is a great possibility that I would, yes, probably I'd cry, by myself, this evening -- by myself -- it's too complicated to explain why, but that's why I wrote this letter. Not to cry.

Ah, Cavafy, I could have had a drink of wine, good Greek wine, with you, this evening. Ah, Vogelweide, ah, Vallejo, ah, all my Paris friends! I lift my glass of Sicilian wine to you, my friends!

Jim

July 8, 2002





All work is printed as it was sent by Jonas, typed from his Olympia Delux typewriter at his home in New York.